

A Concise History of our neighbourhood

by John Williams

The earliest record of our neighbourhood could be regarded as the entry for the manor of **Escelie** (Selley?), a holding of William Fitz Ansculf, (son of Ansculf De Picquigny) in the Domesday Book of 1086 – the map shows the **River Rea** lying between **Escelie** and **Muselie** (Moseley) in the County of Worcestershire. Selley was a manor greater than Birmingham in those days but merely a clearing in the woodlands which dominated this area in those times.

Essentially, the rural nature of the area remained unchanged until the middle of the 19th Century and our area consisted of a few farms and the small hamlet of **Ten Acres** (named after the field on which it was built) at the cross roads formed by the crossing of the ancient pathways between Selly Oak and Moseley and the later turnpike road between Birmingham and Pershore (**Pershore Road**). The land was held by various tenant farmers from the Selly Manor which was within sight of each farm. There is a reference to 'Mill Lane' as part of the road to Moseley which may indicate that the manorial mill was situated on the river close by and its mill pond would be the '**Dogpool**' from which this area derives its name.

The mill became the focus for the expansion of the village in the latter part of the Victorian period in line with the general industrialization of the Birmingham area. It became primarily a metal forming establishment and continued in this role as Clifford's Mill until the 1980s. Most of the local terraced houses were built to house the workers from the mill and other industrial developments in Stirchley, Selly Oak and Bournville. The main period of development took place in the last decade of the 19th Century until the beginning of the First World War in 1914. A few Georgian style houses were built along the turnpike road in the early Victorian period to house middle class professional people who desired to move out of the smoke and grime of Birmingham. These were the earliest speculative properties encouraged by Robert Dolphin, a Birmingham Solicitor, who had himself moved out of the city when he purchased the Estate of Selly Manor in 1835.

He later was the author of the Selly Hall Estate which became the Selly Park Estate largely built on the parkland which surrounded the Palladian Style Selly Hall, now incorporated into **St Paul's Convent** at the top of **Kensington Road**. The remaining farm lands were developed as the pleasantly green suburb of **Selly Park** in the inter-war years and the 1950s to result in the present-day neighbourhood we currently share and to which we welcome new residents.

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